

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: VOCAL CHAMBER DUETS, TRIOS, AND QUARTETS:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE GENRE

Steven Robert Rainbolt, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

Dissertation directed by: Professor Linda Mabbs
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Vocal chamber music for solo voices in the combinations of duets, trios, and quartets flowered from a long tradition of ensemble music-making and produced a bouquet of musical “gems” deserving inclusion on the song recital program. For this dissertation, vocal chamber music specifies music composed for a maximum of four solo voices in duets, trios, and quartets with piano. It excludes music of the theater, sacred repertoire, and all orchestral and large ensemble accompaniment. Also excluded are pre-baroque and baroque a cappella works. Although intended for solo voices, they do not represent my intended definition of vocal chamber music.

It is hoped that this performance dissertation will renew interest in this music. It comprises three recitals representing a variety of styles and languages, demonstrating an overview of the music from the genre, and explores its origins and continuing interest by present-day composers to write music for various voice combinations. In organizing the recitals it was most beneficial to give preference first to the languages and then the styles

and periods. This project is documented by three CD recordings of the respective recitals. Recital I (April 20, 2001) was devoted solely to German works because of the great wealth of literature in that language. The program presented duets, trios, and quartets by Brahms, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann. The pieces were performed by a graduate song repertoire class.

Recital II (May 21, 2002) was devoted to French and Italian works and utilized fewer singers; a quartet consisting of soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, and baritone. They performed duets, trios, and quartets by Chausson, Denza, Donizetti, Dounaudy, Fauré, Gounod, Massenet, Mozart, Rossini, and Saint-Saëns.

Recital III (April 21, 2004) was devoted to duets for soprano and baritone, and presented languages not previously covered: English, Spanish, Czech, and Russian. The intent was to pare down the singers to the most intimate of participants in this genre—the duet. Only one voicing combination was employed since the previous recitals utilized many varieties of duet pairings. This recital included works by Britten, Dvořák, Eccles, Fiske, Foster, Granados, Gretschaninov, Haydn, Lawes, Purcell, Rachmaninoff, Roe, and Sargon.

VOCAL CHAMBER DUETS, TRIOS, AND QUARTETS:
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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CD Recital I German Repertoire:

1.	Der Greis	Franz J. Haydn
2.	Die Beredsamkeit	Franz J. Haydn
3.	Die Harmonie in der Ehe	Franz J. Haydn
4.	Licht und Liebe	Franz Schubert
5.	Mignon und der Harfner	Franz Schubert
6.	Bedeckt mich mit Blumen	Robert Schumann
7.	Blaue Augen hat das Mädchen	Robert Schumann
8.	Abendlied	Felix Mendelssohn
9.	Abschiedslied der Zugvögel	Felix Mendelssohn
10.	Maiglöckchen	Felix Mendelssohn
11.	Ich wollt meine Lieb ergösse sich	Felix Mendelssohn
12.	Herbstlied	Felix Mendelssohn
13.	Das Bandel	W. A. Mozart
14.	Rede, Mädchen	Johannes Brahms
15.	Am Gestein rauscht die Flut	Johannes Brahms
16.	Die grüne Hopfenranke	Johannes Brahms
17.	Ein kleiner, hübscher Vogel	Johannes Brahms
18.	Am Donaustrande	Johannes Brahms
19.	O wie sanft die Quelle	Johannes Brahms
20.	Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen	Johannes Brahms
21.	Schlosser auf, und mache Schlösser	Johannes Brahms
22.	Nachtigal, sie singt so schön	Johannes Brahms
23.	Ein dunkeler Schacht ist Liebe	Johannes Brahms
24.	Es bebet das Gesträuche	Johannes Brahms

CD Recital II French and Italian Repertoire:

1.	Se lontan ben mio tu sei	W. A. Mozart
2.	La Partenza	W. A. Mozart
3.	Par une belles nuit	Charles Gounod
4.	D'un coeur qui t'aime	Charles Gounod
5.	Amor s'apprende	Stefano Donaudy

6.	Pastorale	Camille Saint-Saëns
7.	Viens	Camille Saint-Saëns
8.	Madrigal	Gabriel Fauré
9.	Amor, voce del cielo	Gaetano Donizetti
10.	L'alito di Bice	Gaetano Donizetti
11.	L'aurora	Gaetano Donizetti
12.	Carnevale di Venezia	Gioacchino Rossini
13.	Réveil	Ernest Chausson
14.	La Nuit	Ernest Chausson
15.	Or che notte	Luigi Denza
16.	Les Fleurs	Jules Massenet
17.	Le Poète et le Fantôme	Jules Massenet
18.	Chantez	Jules Massenet

CD Recital III English, Spanish, Czech, and Russian Repertoire:

1.	A Dialogue on a Kiss	Henry Lawes
2.	How Sweet, How Lovely	John Eccles
3.	When Myra Sings	Henry Purcell, arr. Britten
4.	Trip it in a Ring	Henry Purcell
5.	O Had I a Cave	Franz J. Haydn
6.	The Widow's Lament	Franz J. Haydn
7.	Duérmete, Niño	Joaquin Rodrigo
8.	Las currutacas modestas	Enrique Granados
9.	The Deaf Woman's Courtship	Benjamin Britten
10.	Mr. & Mrs. Brown	Stephen Foster
11.	Velet' Vtáčku	Antonin Dvořák
12.	Zajatá	Antonin Dvořák
13.	Věneček	Antonin Dvořák
14.	Answer July	Betty Roe
15.	Voices at the Window	Simon Sargon
16.	Old Adam, the Carrion Crow	Roger Fiske
17.	Two Farewells	Sergei Rachmaninoff
18.	Kolibelnaya	Gretschaninov
19.	Ai-Doo-Doo	Gretschaninov

